

Thomas Jefferson to Edmund Randolph, December 18, 1793, with Copy, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL J. MSS. (EDMUND RANDOLPH)

Philadelphia, Dec. 18. 1793

Sir, —The Minister Plenipotentiary of France has inclosed to me the copy of a letter of the 16th inst. which he addressed to you, stating that some libellous publications had been made against him by mr. Jay, chief Justice of the U. S. & mr. King, one of the Senators for the state of New York, & desiring that they might be prosecuted. This letter has been laid before the President, according to the request of the Minister, & the President, never doubting your readiness on all occasions to perform the functions of your office, yet thinks it incumbent on him to recommend it specially on the present occasion, as it concerns a public character peculiarly entitled to the protection of the laws. On the other hand, as our citizens ought not be to vexed with groundless prosecutions, duty to them requires it to be added, that if you judge the prosecution in question to be of that nature, you consider this recommendation as not extending to it; it's only object being to engage you to proceed in this case according to the duties of your office, the laws of the land & the privileges of the parties concerned. I have the honor &c.